WALTER HINES PAGE A CONSTRUCTIVE WORKER BY NATURE

The Man Nominated to Represent This Nation at the Court of St. James's Has a Record of Achievement in His Chosen Literary and Publishing Fields That Promises Much in the Career to Which He Is Now Invited.

THE nomination of Walter Hines Page, American Citizen, to the post of Ambassador to the Court of St. James's goes to the Senate on Tuesday. Mr. Page had said—over the telephone—that he would be in Garden City at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and at 2 the reporter boarded a train. It carried him under the city and under the East River and then shot out into the midst of a perfect April day on Long Island. The sky was clear and blue, the sun bright and warm and the winds interesting. The way led through broad fields and meadows, broken every mile or two by scattering collections of suburban cottages.

The train at length stopped at the station called Country Life Press, which takes its name from the home of the Doubleday, Page & Co. publications. This is the firm which Mr. Page and Frank N. Doubleday organized in 1910, and of which Mr. Page is still a member. From this station, in the rear of the big publishing plant, one passes by way of an eliminated grade crossing around one end of the building to the main highway that runs between the centre of Hempstead and the centre of Garden City.

Standing at the main entrance to the literary shop, one looks across this highway and down a long avenue of trees which will some day give shade to a double row of suburban villas. Between the shop and the street are trees, shrubbery and broad lawns. To one side lies a large pool of water screened from view by close set cedar trees. The two storied building is a wide-spreading, three-sided hollow square. In the large courtyard thus formed an Italian garden stretches away to meet the dull red walls.

If authors came here in person to retrieve their rejected manuscripts the pleasure of coming and going through this charming setting of garden, lawns and shrubbery would remove whatever sting their disappointment might otherwise have caused. They would then be on an equal footing with those whom, it is presumed, O. Henry had in mind when he said:

"Walter Page can write a letter declining a contribution with thanks and send it so sweetly that the recipient can take it to a bank and raise money on it."

From an old English entrance hall the caller climbed a flight of stairs, mentioned his name and errand and was seated in an old English reception room, panelled in oak and lined head high with books, chiefly Doubleday, Page & Co.'s publications. Here Mr. Page presently came.

He walked briskly and with a spring that was a better indication of his active vitality than were his thin and scanty gray hairs. So briskly, in fact, that by the time the visitor had risen Mr. Page had crossed the wide room and stood close to him. He smiled in a friendly way and shook hands.

"Well, how long do you want to talk to me?" were his first words. And the impression the intruder gained from his tone was that Mr. Page sought the information merely that he might so arrange his affairs as not to interfere with the visit.

However, Mr. Page was born and reared in the South, and the reporter sought to conserve his own interests by making what shift he could to avoid giving a direct answer to the question.

"Come with me," said Mr. Page, and the reporter followed the publisher along an endless aisle between high stacks of unbound printed sheets about to be made into books.

Mr. Page's office is in the southwest corner. The late afternoon sun slanted in through the leaded glass panes, across a broad mahogany desk and lighted up a large framed photograph of Rudyard Kipling, who, it is said, suggested to Mr. Page the name for "The World's Work" magazine. Beside this picture hangs an oil portrait of the late Professor Shaler, of Harvard, who was one of that choice group with whom Mr. Page was thrown while he was editing "The Atlantic Monthly" and living in old Cambridge, during the late 90's. Underneath are long rows of many books. In one end of the room, opposite the south window, is a huge fireplace and mantel. On the wall by the west window, which Mr. Page faces when he sits at his desk, hangs a large framed photograph of John Muir, whom he brought into "The Atlantic Monthly," following a visit which he paid to the famous naturalist in California.

The reporter sank half out of sight in an inviting and comfortable leather sofa with his back to the south window, through which Mr. Page as he sat opposite could let his gaze wander over the long lines of arbors and trellises, which in a few more weeks will be covered with blooming roses. At the end of one arbor is a curious sun dial, with the names of famous publishers marking the hours and some verses from the Gutenburg Bible carved in the middle.

It was suggested to Mr. Page that he reveal the nature of his tastes in the line of recreation. He admitted that he "played a little golf" and was a "pretty good walker," but athletics had apparently not held his interest. When he was an undergraduate in Randolph-Macon College, Virginia, college contests were purely informal, and his activities along that line had therefore been simply those of a healthy and normal boy.

In describing the methods of editing "The World's Work Magazine" Mr. Page told how he and the other editors made frequent trips about the country to prevent their viewpoints from becoming narrowed and localized. "Localized" was the word he used, and his voice expressed aversion. As he continued it became very plain why the mention of golf aroused in him even less enthusiasm than would a tornado in the breast of a Kansas wheat farmer. Getting into close personal touch with all the big, constructive ideas and achievements to be found among men of all pursuits and nationalities has given him a greater zest of life than will ever come out of a midiron or a brassie. His principal recreation has been in thus travelling over all the length and breadth of the United States to see and talk with men of action wherever found—the men who "do things." In this can be seen a reflection of his own earlier activities, when he was making a leisurely trip through his native Southland, studying the people and seeing the country and writing letters for papers in the North that attracted wide attention.

It is a custom that he has never left off and it has brought him enjoyment and, in the fullest sense of the word, recreation. For the last thirteen years it has been turned to the uses and construction of his principal magazine, just as it was turned to the service of the nation when President Roosevelt appointed Mr. Page to the Country Life Commission. In sort, this magazine—"The World's Work"—is a pretty good index to Mr. Page's personality. A reference being made to the fact that the magazine had a character quite distinguishing it from any other, Mr. Page said:

"Yes, it's different. But then any magazine is bound to have individuality. Examine any one of the big magazines—you will find that each expresses the personality of the men behind it. The founding of 'The World's Work' was simply the logical outcome of the mutual experiences, training and tastes of its editors.

"We had organized a publishing firm, and as its members had had considerable experience in the editing and managing of magazines it was natural that they should start one of their own. The founding of 'The World's Work' was not, as has been stated, coincident with the founding of the publishing firm, but followed a few months later in the same year—1910. We were following the line of least resistance."

Mr. Page was unwilling to take any credit to himself for the introduction of President Wilson into public life, although it had long been in his mind, he said, that a man of President Wilson's ability who had made such a close and extended study of the theory and practice of government would be of great service to the public if elected to some high public office. He has been referred to as one of the three or four pioneers in urging Woodrow Wilson to enter public life.

"I ran across Mr. Wilson up in Connecticut," said Mr. Page, "while he was being talked of as a candidate for Governor of New Jersey. I was very much interested, of course, believing that it would be greatly to the public's benefit if he became Governor.

"So I said to him: 'Are you going in for this thing? Are you going to get it?'

"'Well,' he replied, 'my friends in New Jersey tell me it is likely to come to me, and if it does I shall take it.'

"And that," added Mr. Page, "was his attitude throughout that period. He did not seek the office, but he welcomed the opportunity when it came."

"Is it true," Mr. Page was asked, "that you have known President Wilson for thirty years?"

"Well, it is hardly accurate to say 'known,'" said Mr. Page, "although it is about thirty years since we first met. That was while President Wilson was a graduate student at Johns Hopkins and after I had done some work there. Since then we have been thrown together at various times and at one time and another have seen quite a little of one another."

And then a curious smile played about the corners of Mr. Page's mouth. It seemed to be the smile of a modest man who doesn't see his own greatness and wonders just why some one else has placed so high an appraisal on his abilities. And as he smiled he said:

"At any rate, President Wilson seems to think he knows me," and there may have been just a faint inflection on the last word—"that is, he seems to think he can rely on my judgment."

The offer of the appointment to the ambassadorship came to Mr. Page like a bolt from the blue, and in the short time that had elapsed it may well be imagined that he had been experiencing some difficulty in adjusting himself to such an entirely unexpected proposal. That he has consented to accept the mission is regarded as fortunate.

Mr. Page's career has been one that has brought him distinction. He was born in Cary, near Raleigh, N. C., on August 15, 1855. His early years were devoted to newspaper work. He was editor of "The Forum" for five years before he went to "The Atlantic Monthly." He gave up the latter post to avoid sticking to one thing until he became narrowed. After a few months as advisory editor for Harper & Bros., the publishers, he went into his present work. For years he has taken a month each year to lecture, but otherwise has done little public speaking, avoiding much after-dinner speaking, because he felt that his greater enjoyment and best interests lay in spending his evenings at home surveying the important current books and publications.

"Be sure you look at that sun dial," said Mr. Page to the reporter who was leaving, and his parting smile was of the sort that would have enabled the dial to reveal the hour had it been in the caller's place.

Walter H. Page.

THURSDAY WILL BE NEW YEAR'S DAY FOR THE EAGER ARMY OF "FANS"

IT all depends on whether one is a "fan" or not. To those who can't tell a bingle from a pitcher's box this week will probably be as jejune as the one before.

But among the "fans" the rhapsody grows wilder every hour. Baseball reporters are polishing up thousands of nutty idioms, expressions of concentrated vitality which the brains of the baseball reporter must work at high pressure to produce.

Greek and Latin had no slang. Another reason, no doubt, why baseball writers stick to vivid and elastic English. One of the most noticeable things they do with their chosen medium of expression is to take some of our best words and use them jocularly or satirically in a consciously distorted sense.

Distilling, then, the dope that has been filtering through the sporting pages for several weeks, and putting this and that together, it is plain to any one that there is time for only one more blissful, harmonious sigh before the umpire flecks the dust from off the home plate in the first official ball game of the year.

The seraphic season for "fans," bugs and rooters has arrived. It is in the air. Let the riot begin. Yesterday there was an unofficial opening in Brooklyn.

Teams all over the country will meet each other head-on this week, and if nothing gives way at the seams 'twill be fortunate. Because the seams will sure be strained.

The first official battle of the season will be fought on Wednesday at the new Ebbets field, in Brooklyn (some interesting facts concerning which field will be found in this article), between the Dodgers and the Doolnites.

Bedlam that will all but shake its concrete foundation will be created at the Polo Grounds on Thursday, when the Giants meet the Boston Braves. That way will also see the opening of the rest of the National League and the whole of the American League.

What midnight murders are to Mexico, baseball is to this country—a national safety valve.

Psychic pitchers have been practising inside baseball outdoors in sunny lands for weeks. Expert judges on the ground have been keeping the wires a-sizzle informing the baseball army everywhere of the involuted, intricate and complicated delivery of some six-foot recruit from the brush.

We are told that there is a slabbist who has elevated twirling to the realm of the occult. His work will be deadly. By comparison trigonometry will be easy for a batter to elucidate.

Just wait and take note. One look out of the eye of this phenomenen will get the mental goat of the best batter by psychic influence. There's nothing else to it—take it from the baseball expert, who also sends along, for the delectation of his constantly growing circle of readers, a few kegs of assorted verbal inshoots in further describing the arm work of the idol.

Ambidextrous pitchers are often talked about by wire, but seldom materialize on the mound.

Nothing is said all this time of the keen pleasure the pitcher gets from sleeping on a hard bed in the training quarters, gulping down some breakfast, walking through gummy Southern mud and then punishing himbself in a sticky ball yard until noon. But there is no royal road to learning—of any kind.

He will feel repaid if, in some hard fought battle, after first winding himself up like a Waterbury watch and then uncoiling himself like a "busted" mainspring, he can induce a famous walloper of the seasoned leather to fan the pellucid atmosphere three times without once interfering with the hurtling flight of the horsehide.

On such visions as this and other dramatic incidents "fans" have been compelled to subsist. And for the want of something better they have revelled in long distance reports from spring training grounds far outside of the 50-cent night letter belt.

They have followed each play that the Giants and Yankees have made in games with assorted local champions from various points in the South.

Meyers hasn't flipped a pop fly single to short left and fetched in a little run, no matter whether the run was needed or not, but a vast army of "fans" has noted the circumstance with feelings largely inspired by the geographical location of the rooter, "bug" or "fan" aforesaid.

A lame arm or leg among the Yankees has been viewed by this same horde as possessing elements of interest not exceeded by the position of this nation with respect to the Chinese loan.

Have the men been reduced to the proper weight so that they can travel at top speed whenever Frank Chance says the word? THAT is what the "fans" want to know. And have endurance and stamina been developed along with swiftness of foot?

Suppose one Carroll of the Birmingham, Ala., team, makes a weird but effective stop of Merkle's sulphuric grounder in the seventh. Despair. But the game is ultimately wrapped up by a screaming line fly from Herzog's second growth ash—why, then everything is all right with the world, after all.

Suppose the Turk DOES refuse to be shooed out of Europe. There probably is something to be said on his side of the question. Anyway, bo, forget the Bulgarians, can't you, and PLAY BALL!

There is no question about it, millions of persons are all "het" up. The horsehide is about to be sent on a hasty mission through the ambient air. Some of the wallops will send the ball in the general direction of Oompah, Ore. The fight for the pennant will be on in earnest.

Vociferation this week in these parts will be varied and vehement. Also penetrating. Likewise prolonged.

Devasting floods of long pent-up desire and the "fans" have all exploded time and again, and have gone home for cough drops and repairs, it all happens over again to the accompaniment of a peaceful evening smoke.

All kinds of voices will be utilized at the opening game to express pleasure or pain. But the voices recalling the carrying power of the old-fashioned calliope which used to bring up the rear of the Barnum's Circus parade will do the most versatile and generally useful work of the afternoon.

The loudest yeller will not necessarily have the most fun. There are a lot of "fans" with perfectly good intentions and desires, and really wonderfully developed bumps of appreciation for the fine points of the game, who, nevertheless, aren't constructed along the lines of a factory siren. Many of these will become purple in the face in their efforts to overcome nature's shortcomings.

The city will be well represented at the Polo Grounds and the new Ebbets Field. The bench, the bar, the stage, the Street will be there.

Gray haired connoisseurs in staple and fancy pop flies and bingles, the evanescent triple and the rare clout for the circuit, will also be there. When the game reaches a climax these otherwhile quiet gentlemen will perform as if they are empty in the eaves.

The boxes, as well as bleachers, will resemble one vast dippy pavilion. The reserved seat section will give an exhibition of the undiluted bliss that is inspired by an unfettered allegiance to the great American whoop. Facile manipulators of the spheroid and the bat will be lionized.

He and she and they will feel the shivery and exquisite joy of it and climb up on chairs to prove it.

Is it atmospheric champagne that produces these strange changes, makes fast financiers forget the rapidity with which ups and downs occur in the w. k. market and crowds brooding hypochondriasis over the outfield wall? Something is accomplishing wonderful things. The dash, the slide, the wild throw, the muff, the noise, the head-on collision, may have something to do with it.

Anyway, the game has transformed the faces of the multitude. Look at father. Florid songs fill the heart of the man whose regular job in life is the support of nine children and a wife. He no longer even thinks of the date on which his policy falls due.

There is nothing—no, not at all—atrophied about the greatest game in the world. Under its influence conservative men of affairs evolve into ebullient comrades. Even the man who is afflicted with an ingrowing opinion that everything is going to the devil forgets it for the time being.

And how can he help it?

When the game is a tie in the ninth, bases full, two and three on the batter and two out—with the home team at bat—

Continued on seventh page.

"ROOTERS." "BUGS" AND "FANS."